

Bringing Rangelands into the Sustainable Landscapes Agenda

Report on Discussion Panel Held at the
Global Landscapes Forum Event,
*'Forest and Landscape Restoration in Africa:
Prospects and Opportunities'*

29-30 August 2018



Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

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This document reports on a discussion panel that was held at the Global Landscapes Forum event “Forest and Landscape Restoration in Africa: Prospects and Opportunities” held on 29 and 30 August 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya. The contents of the report do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the above-mentioned organizations, the International Land Coalition, or the Livestock CRP.



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1. Introduction and Background

The place of rangelands in the sustainable landscapes movement

Despite some promising initiatives to apply the landscape approach to a diversity of ecosystem types and an agenda that is gradually becoming more inclusive, until now the sustainable landscapes movement has focused primarily on, and has developed the bulk of its experience in, forest ecosystems and landscapes where crop agriculture is prominent. Rangeland landscapes, on the other hand, have their own distinctive social and biophysical characteristics. The mobility of livestock keepers with their herds, for example, is both an adaptation of human communities to their environment and a fundamental aspect of ecosystem dynamics. Well-intentioned techniques and technologies, land restoration objectives, restoration metrics, institutional structures, and modes of stakeholder engagement borrowed from other settings, if not tailored to these characteristics of rangeland systems but instead are applied unthinkingly as blueprints, will prove ineffective. Worse, they may undermine local processes that are already working but which do not conform to the expectations of international environmental actors. In dry rangeland settings, landscape approaches—even the very concept of what constitutes *a landscape*—must be reimagined.

Until recently, these ecosystems have remained at fringes of most of the global environmental processes and debates. Global climate finance for instance is a case in point. Although it can, in theory, apply to any category of ecosystem, in practice rangeland systems, because of misconceptions about them, their social and biophysical complexity, and uncertainty over methods and measurement, have mostly remained on the sidelines. However, finally now there are tentative signs of change. With the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) framework of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), for example, there is a piece of the global environmental governance architecture that at least has the potential to support sustainable management and potential restoration of rangeland landscapes. With adoption at the Second United National Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) of [a resolution on sustainable pastoralism and rangelands](#) and its call for assessing and closing the gaps in knowledge on rangelands, there is a strong impetus toward developing the knowledge that will be needed.

The discussion panel session at the GLF Nairobi event

With that background in mind, partners involved in the Rangelands Initiative of the International Land Coalition (ILC) organized a discussion panel at the Global Landscapes Forum event “Forest and Landscape Restoration in Africa: Prospects and Opportunities” held on 29 and 30 August 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is a multi-sectoral platform for integrated land use, bringing together world leaders, scientists, private sector representatives, farmers and community leaders and civil society to accelerate action towards the creation of more resilient, equitable, profitable, and climate-friendly landscapes. The purpose of the discussion panel, entitled “Bringing Rangelands into the Sustainable Landscapes Agenda”, was to explore what the landscape approach can look like in rangelands, and how it can effectively contribute to the pursuit of global mechanisms and initiatives for sustainable landscapes. It aimed at continuing the process of widening

the sustainable landscapes agenda and helping to connect what rangeland communities are learning on the ground, with global processes.

Partners involved in organizing the session included the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Environment, and the Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE). Financial support for the session was provided by the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Livestock and the Rangelands Initiative of the ILC.

The discussion panel included remarks from panelists representing pastoralist communities, multilateral organizations, and government organizations. This was followed by breakout group discussions around particular topics, and finally closing remarks from the Director of the Nature Based Solutions Group of the IUCN. Approximately eighty people attended the session and participated in the discussions.

2. Panelist Remarks

The discussion panel was moderated by Dr. Lance W. Robinson, Senior Scientist at ILRI. The panelists were:

- Ikal Angelei, Program Coordinator, Friends of Lake Turkana, Kenya
- Abdelkader Bensada, Programme Management Officer, United Nations Environment
- Dr. Enkh-Amgalan Tseelei, National Coordinator, Rangeland Ecosystem Management Project “Green Gold” of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Mongolia (video presentation)
- Nahid Naghizadeh, Senior Expert and Research Associate, Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment, Iran (video presentation)
- John Kamanga, Director, South Rift Association of Land Owners (SORALO), Kenya
- Dr. Stephen Justice Nindi, Director General, National Land Use Planning Commission (NLUPC) of Tanzania.

3. Breakout Group Sessions

Following the panelists’ remarks, participants in the session clustered themselves in three discussion groups around the following themes:

i. Implementing landscape approaches

Overarching question: How might successful landscape approaches look different in rangelands than they do in other settings?

ii. Ensuring that rangelands are on the global sustainable landscapes agenda

Overarching question: What can we do to give rangelands more prominence in the sustainable landscapes agenda?

iii. A Multi-Stakeholder Approach for Sustainable Rangelands

Overarching question: What is needed to promote participatory, multi-stakeholder approaches to managing rangeland landscapes?

i. Implementing landscape approaches

The guiding question for this group was “How might successful landscape approaches look different in rangelands than they do in other settings?” Initially, the discussion focused on the challenges for implementing a landscape approach in rangelands, and on how the constraints facing landscape approaches, and restoration more generally, differ in communal rangelands from forested or farming landscapes. Observations that emerged from the discussion included the following:

Coordination is one of the main challenges in managing rangelands landscapes over large scales:

- Certainly, a multi-stakeholder approach is required to bring different groups of stakeholders into discussions.
- However, each stakeholder group has different power in the situation, leading to power imbalances among stakeholders.
- The influences of implicit and explicit power structures on negotiation and planning of rangeland management are key considerations for achieving lasting progress.

Other significant practical challenges to restorative management of rangelands landscapes include:

- Ongoing declines in connectivity (or mobility) among rangeland areas.
- Impacts of increasingly chaotic climate variability on range and livestock production (and, by the same token, rangeland restoration).
- A lack of capacity and resources for implementation of rangeland management over large scales limits the up-scaling, indicating roles for community leaders and technical advisors to share experience and knowledge, and for donors to support planning and management in rangelands.

Policy at the national and international levels and national systems also pose challenges:

- The general state of disconnection between national policies and structures and traditional or customary pastoralist systems was noted as a key constraint in building the capacity of communities and making smart investments in rangeland areas, such as water points among other examples.
- Adjustments to national systems to make them more relevant to dryland pastoral and mixed production systems could enhance the effectiveness of these systems and could help reduce the marginalization of pastoralists within nations.
- At the international level, transboundary differences in policy among countries increasingly inhibit access of pastoralists across border regions, and national dialogue as well as transboundary dialogue among pastoral groups are needed to facilitate access. These restrictions on movements of people and livestock pose a serious obstacle for scaling up sustainable management of rangelands to cover large areas.

The importance of establishing boundaries of ownership or other rights for rangeland landscapes was discussed:

- Some voiced the views that landscapes are socially constructed by all stakeholders, including the ‘experts’.
- Others saw this viewed as unhelpful, and stated that not only do rangeland landscapes exist, but also that rangeland landscapes must be defined to protect the rights of those who live in, own, and/or manage those rangelands.

- Here the ‘pastoral paradox’ comes into play¹. There is a clear need to define rights of land ownership and other rights in pastoral rangelands, yet the question of rights for who and where remains—firm boundaries restrict mobility and access to different pasture areas; weak boundaries reduce the ability of communities to manage and improve their core pastures. The creation of ‘robust-yet-flexible’ boundaries for rangelands remains a key priority.

The discussion then turned to issues such as what people implementing landscape approaches in any setting might learn from participatory rangeland management approaches. The challenges of planning for the integration of livestock-based livelihoods with other kinds of livelihoods—including what a landscape approach might have to offer in situations of farmer-pastoralist conflict—were also discussed. Many of the key lessons noted related to the improvement of multi-functionality and using a more diverse portfolio of livelihoods to motivate restoration. Discussion points included the following:

- In forested areas, landscape approaches generally focus on a single provisioning ecosystem service—usually wood production, with its associated co-benefits, or crop production in less forested landscapes.
- There was a consensus that rangeland landscapes can benefit from the spatial integration of grazing, cropping, forestry/agro-forestry, and fodder farming under guiding management plans. Further, even under sedentary agro-pastoral production there are still usually communal resources for grazing and other uses, meaning that communal lands have a role in supporting multi-functional landscapes.
- However, land use alone is not enough for effective planning and management. Multi-sectoral platforms for planning and management of pastoral rangelands need to go beyond land use, and to incorporate planning and management of water points, invasive species control, restoration investments, and development of extractive resources with planning and management of grazing, cropping, forestry/agro-forestry, and fodder farming.
- Multi-functional landscape approaches in forest or cropping systems can be informed by multi-functional approaches from rangelands—that integrate grazing, cropping, forestry/agro-forestry, and fodder farming—improving their effectiveness by supporting a wider selection of livelihood options.
- Regarding the social construction of landscapes, rangelands can demonstrate for humid zones (forests, croplands) how the perceptions of different stakeholder groups affect planning and management for multi-functionality that effectively supports livelihoods and accelerates restoration, for example: what a landscape is, how it should be used, what priority management objectives are, how to accomplish these objectives.
- Rangelands demonstrate more clearly than other systems the dangers of individualization trends that often compromise communal ethics, norms, and the systems they support.

ii. Ensuring that rangelands are on the global sustainable landscapes agenda

This group discussion explored the reasons as to why rangelands are not featured on the global sustainable landscapes agenda. The group facilitator started the session by highlighting that this is an

¹ For a discussion of this concept, see <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1023/A:1014562913014.pdf> and <http://hdl.handle.net/10568/81560>.

issue that has been discussed for many years, although perhaps without as much tangible success as might be hoped.

Key highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Rangelands have been neglected in terms of policy and legislation, at the global, national and regional levels, even though they represent the largest landscapes that we have.
- There is a United Nations Environment Assembly resolution that puts rangelands at the top of priorities, as well as support towards an International Year of Rangelands, but this is not enough.

Some reasons why rangelands are not yet prominent in the global agendas for restoration were given as follows:

- It is hard to get rangelands into the agenda due to marginalization of the groups that use these rangelands, regardless of the fact that they are very vast.
- There is lack of information about the numbers of pastoralists. Social and political information also, does not exist. The lack of this data means that there is no evidence to share at a global level.
- It emerged that overall, governments do not allocate adequate funds for data collection.
- There are also cultural issues surrounding data collection. Pastoralists are often unwilling to reveal their wealth.
- There are also security issues around certain geographies occupied by pastoralists, which hinder data collection and other potential interventions.
- Pastoralists are not included in the debates because they are not considered part of the mainstream society. It is important to note that they would be willing to contribute to development by paying taxes if relevant services were to be offered to them. We need to consider what services are being offered to them.
- During the discussion session, there were other sentiments that the data exists, but the government does not have the capacity to tax the wealth of pastoralists. Pastoralists have been historically ignored because their wealth cannot be controlled.
- It also emerged that governments are unwilling to expose areas that are underdeveloped, which is where rangelands are primarily found; hence pastoralists and rangelands are sidelined. Technical support to pastoralists and basic services such as healthcare, are lacking. Lack of allocation of funds to rangelands management by governments has contributed to underdevelopment of these areas.
- Rangelands have not yet been explored intensively from a business perspective.

Some recommendations given on how rangelands can be included on the sustainable landscapes agenda include:

- For rangelands to be included in discussions on climate change, there is a need to first ensure that the pastoralists are included in the national agenda, then they would perhaps be included in regional and global agendas.
- There is also a need to quantify the contribution that Africa could make to meeting the stipulations of the Paris agreement. Quantifying the contribution that Africa could make towards reducing CO2 emissions would put African rangelands on the map of relevant global debates.
- Livelihoods can be linked more strongly to rangelands to bring them on the map.

iii. A multi-stakeholder approach for sustainable rangelands

This breakout group addressed the question of what is needed to promote participatory, multi-stakeholder approaches to managing rangeland landscapes. Some of the initial points raised included the following:

- It is important to understand who the stakeholders are. Therefore, stakeholder mapping exercises where stakeholders are categorized for instance at county, national and local levels will be important.
- A comprehensive mapping of actors is required as well as a regional mapping of stakeholders.
- Contextual factors need to be considered for each area with rangelands because a one size fits all solution is not always workable. This includes differences in the varieties of stakeholders that are relevant, as this can vary greatly from place to place.
- There is need to avoid overlapping of institutions implementing similar initiatives. Institutions and communities executing similar programs are often created under different names based on the different organizations they work for.
- Policies are needed to enable landscape approaches.
- Emerging conflicts in conservation and rangeland areas need to be dealt with.
- There is need to recognize the different structures for stakeholder consultation and land-use initiatives.

The discussion also considered the unique characteristics of rangeland settings and how these might affect approaches to participation and stakeholder engagement. It was noted that in pastoralist rangelands, grouping of stakeholders works better by following traditional institutions and forms of social organization. This also led to a consideration of the importance of land tenure and questions around whether participation in landscape governance processes can be meaningful without establishing secure land tenure for rangeland communities. Points raised included the following:

- Issues of boundaries need to be addressed through enforcement of policy and legal structures.
- There is need to deal with emerging issues such as those between farmers and pastoralists.
- Stakeholders need to be encouraged to work together across boundaries as is the case in a transhumance setting.
- Issues of land tenure and lack of boundaries need to be addressed for progress in rangelands.
- There is need for a broader understanding of the nature of cross-border resource use.

Participants in the group discussion also considered how government and non-governmental agencies can adapt their strategies and approaches for land management, to better fit rangelands. The following suggestions were given:

- Participation of stakeholders should be allowed and encouraged for better adaptation of land management strategies proposed by government and non-governmental agencies.
- Land use initiatives should be identified to encompass across stakeholders.
- Transboundary and regional issues need to be acknowledged.
- The ways that pastoralists use resources and move with livestock means that what constitutes a meaningful “landscape” may often be vast. This implies that the “landscape” in a landscape approach may be much larger in pastoralist rangelands than in other settings.

- There is need to acknowledge shared resources to account for multi-stakeholder approaches.

Participants, drawing on their own experiences, identified lessons learnt about participatory and multi-stakeholder approaches:

- Without secure land tenure, a multi-stakeholder approach will not be attained.
- There is a need to recognize the various dynamics that existed before recent land tenure innovations such as community conservancies came about to secure land for local residents, considering pastoralists who come from further places and utilize the resources in an area.
- Planning needs to be done at a larger scale to cater for the needs of local pastoralists as well as mobile pastoralists. The question is, however, how do we plan on a larger scale considering:
 - i. the expenses involved in bringing people from far areas into one conversation, and
 - ii. cross-border agreements and policies that arises where different countries are involved.
- Strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination, learning and sharing lessons across stakeholders is critical in enhancing multi-stakeholder approaches.
- Using existing mechanisms and structures to promote multi-stakeholder approaches before creating new avenues of communication that may take time and cost more.
- There is need for capacity building for the stakeholders to level their skills, interests and to engage all stakeholders at the same level.
- Using a landscape approach to bring together different countries under common cross-border agreements.
- Using coordinated land forums to guide capacity building and collaborative decision making.
- Borrowing from the Tanzanian multi-stakeholder approach for integrated landscape management by having committees at different levels such as the Steering Committee, Technical Committee and a local level committee.

4. Conclusions

Panelists and participants in this session came from a variety of backgrounds and many countries. A number of key ways in which rangeland landscapes have their own unique characteristics were highlighted, both by the panelists and the participants themselves in the breakout group discussions. Participants also shared a wide range of lessons and success stories on ecosystem and landscape management in rangelands. Recommendations gleaned from the session include the following:

- It will be difficult to give pastoralist rangelands a firm place in global environment and development agendas without the support of national governments. A key pre-requisite, therefore, is to work to ensure that pastoralist rangelands have a prominent place in national agendas.
- There is a need to quantify the contribution that African rangelands can make to meeting the goals of the Paris climate change agreement. Quantifying the contribution that Africa could make towards reducing CO2 emissions would put African rangelands on the map of relevant global debates.

- It is telling that many of the GLF communications refer to “forest and landscape restoration”, including the title of this event. Much of the thinking and action on landscape approaches and landscape restoration are dominated by forests and forestry. In the discussions it was noted that not all ecosystems are meant to be forests. It is recommended that GLF take tangible steps to mainstream rangelands in its agendas. The partners who were involved in organizing this discussion panel stand ready to assist in this regard.